

May 14, 2009 INDIANAPOLIS –Despite successful efforts that have cut by nearly half the number of households unprepared for the digital television (DTV) transition, a recent report states that Indianapolis still has some work to do to get ready for the switch-over, Congressman André Carson announced today. Carson said Congress' efforts to push back the DTV transition date from February to June of this year, combined with a more aggressive outreach program to educate the public, have successfully reduced the number of unprepared households nationally from 6.5 million to 3.5 million. Yet more work is needed in the final month, according to a Nielson report issued this week.

Nielson released data that show Indianapolis as the 16th

least-prepared market in terms of the percentage of households that still remain unable to receive a digital signal. Nearly 3.6 percent of the Indianapolis market, or more than 40,000 households, are not ready for the switch-over that takes place on June 12. The Albuquerque/Santa Fe market ranked number one with 8.5 percent of its households not prepared.

Given the latest data, Congressman Carson encouraged local households still relying on an over-the-air television signal “to take immediate steps” to get ready for DTV by purchasing a digital converter box for their television.

“Television is more than just a medium for entertainment—it’s a vital communications tool that plays a key role in keeping our community informed and safe, especially when the threat of severe weather is involved,” Carson said. “We have just four weeks before the DTV transition, so it’s important we continue the push to educate people about what this change means and the options they have to ensure access to their local stations when June 12 arrives.”

To help struggling households defray the costs of the digital converter boxes, the Congressman encouraged qualifying residents to take advantage of the Department of

Commerce’s TV Converter Box Coupon Program, which provides \$40 coupons to cover most of the cost of the set-top boxes. So far, more than 55 million coupons have been used nationwide.

Congressman Carson noted anyone who has television service through a cable company or satellite provider is ready for the transition—all signal conversion will be handled by their provider.

Only households that rely on free, over-the-air TV and use “rabbit ears” or a rooftop antenna to receive a signal need to take additional measures to be ready for DTV. These households have three choices to prepare for the transition:

1)

subscribe to cable, satellite or Internet-protocol-based TV service;

2)

purchase a television with a digital tuner; or

3)

buy a converter box which plugs into your analog TV and will convert the signal to digital.

If people have already received their coupon, Congressman Carson suggested not waiting until the last minute to purchase a converter box, and noted the coupons are good for 90 days.

People can purchase the set-top box at a partnering retail store, all of which are listed on the official DTV Web site,

www.DTV2009.gov

. The Web site, set up by the Department of Commerce as a clearing house of information about the DTV transition, also allows people to apply for coupons and find the closest retail location to them to make their converter box purchase.

For those without Internet access, there are two toll-free numbers available to provide information about DTV:

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1-888-DTV-2009 – This number should be used to apply for coupons and locate nearby partnering retailers.

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1-888-CALL-FCC – Residents who have more general questions about the DTV transition and the steps they need to take should call this number.

In February, Congressman Carson went to the floor of the House to encourage his colleagues to delay the DTV transition. That delay was passed and signed into law. Since then, the Obama Administration has worked with Congress to proactively push education on DTV and set aside money under the Recovery and Reinvestment Act to allow the Department of Commerce to help more Americans with the transition so they can continue to receive important local television news and emergency information.

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